



Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Shuttle System



Goal and Vision Statement

Provide an alternative transportation shuttle system for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that enhances the visitor experience, increases accessibility and contributes to resource protection.

We envision a system that will:

- maximize recreation and enjoyment while reducing traffic congestion
- offer a unique interpretive experience
- link state and county park sites with National Park Service sites and with the transportation system in the region
- facilitate outstanding one-way hiking and biking routes through return to

starting point service via shuttle

- improve air quality while reducing traffic and the demand for parking facilities
- increase awareness of sustainability and air quality issues.

Project Objective and Background

The objective is to implement a demonstration project that is focused on weekend service for the "Heart-of-the-Park" loop serving popular coastal and mountain sites (see above map). The loop concept was developed based on input from the public and from public agencies during 2000 and 2001. The

planning process began with an extensive Visitor Survey that yielded over 600 responses at 18 federal, state, and local park sites. A majority of those interviewed were strongly interested in a shuttle system that would link multiple park sites. The process also included several meetings and consultations with various jurisdictions and public agencies in the area.

A project consultant developed and refined route alternatives. A public meeting and two special focus group meetings were conducted to obtain input and receive ideas from existing and potential users of the National Recreation Area.

How Will It Work?

The shuttle system will:

- Operate a weekend service, all day on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Use clean technology minibuses, running on ultra low sulfur diesel.
- Be equipped to carry mountain bikes, surfboards, and other equipment.
- Provide hourly service in both directions of the "Heart-of-the-Park" loop by using 4 shuttle buses.
- Staggered timing will reduce the maximum wait for a shuttle to about 30-40 minutes for those willing to travel in either direction on the loop. The maximum wait to continue in the same direction would be 60 minutes.
- Provide convenient Park and Ride facilities.
- Connect with regional transit lines such as the MTA 434 bus route.

Who will use the shuttle?

- Residents of surrounding areas, including Los Angeles and Ventura counties.
- Those seeking an experience, including visitors from around the world.
- Mountain bikers, trail runners,



View of Zuma Beach and flowers

- hikers, bird watchers, clubs, tourists.
- The young, the old and others who do not wish to drive.
- Those who wish to avoid parking hassles or dislike driving on mountain roads.
- Perhaps 5% of the existing park users: total visitation for the sites on the planned route is currently estimated at 10,000 persons per weekend day (summer).

When will the system be operational?

The demonstration phase of the system will begin operating in the summer 2004, during the 25th anniversary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Planning and environmental compliance was completed in 2003. Design of new facilities is underway.

How much will it cost to ride the shuttle?

- A fare structure is being developed based on survey and focus group input.
- Public input also suggests that a fare discount be offered for the beginning of the demonstration phase, and that young children ride for free.
- Those who pay to park at State Park sites and then board the NPS shuttle may be given a credit towards shuttle fares by presenting their parking receipt.

How will the system be financed?

- The National Park Service has funded planning and environmental compliance.
- Capital elements only are eligible for NPS Alternative Transportation funds, part of the Federal Lands Highways Program.
- The service will be contracted, and fare revenues are expected to cover 25 to 30% of the annual cost of the contract.
- The remaining operating costs must be covered by support from partner agencies that have recurring revenue sources such as park entrance or parking fees.



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About the Park

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area exists to conserve for the Nation its best remaining example of ever-rarer Mediterranean ecosystems, as well as its associated natural, cultural, scenic and historic resources and to provide a quality National Park experience for the diverse peoples of Southern California.

This extraordinarily diverse ecosystem is home to 26 distinct natural communities, from freshwater aquatic habitats and coastal lagoons to oak woodlands, valley oak savanna and chaparral. Situated in densely populated Southern California, the recreation area is a critical haven for more than 450 animal species, including mountain lions, bobcats and golden eagles. It is also home to 25 rare, threatened or endangered plants and animals.